

**EPI Update for Friday, June 26, 2015**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

**Items for this week's EPI Update include:**

- IDPH flood page activated
- Update on MERS in Korea
- Firework safety
- EIS officer leaving IDPH, but staying close by
- Epi-Update next week

**IDPH flood page activated**

This Web page was activated to highlight some flood-related disease precautions and information. Links and resources listed on this page contain a variety of health and environmental precautions. For additional information, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/EmergencyResponse/Flooding.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/EmergencyResponse/Flooding.aspx).

**Update on MERS in Korea**

Since May 2015, the Republic of Korea has been investigating an outbreak of MERS. It is the largest known outbreak of MERS outside the Arabian Peninsula. As of June 23, 174 cases in the Republic of Korea have been confirmed by the World Health Organization. All transmission has been linked to health care facilities where MERS patients were treated.

CDC does not recommend that Americans change their travel plans to the Republic of Korea or other countries because of MERS. The risk to travelers is low, but travelers should still follow these tips:

Protect yourself:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Avoid touching your face
- Avoid close contact with sick people

Pay attention to your health:

- Watch for symptoms of MERS including fever and cough or shortness of breath
- Contact a doctor if you develop these symptoms within 14 days after being in a health care facility in the Republic of Korea
- Tell the doctor about your recent travel before you go in for your appointment

For more information, visit [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/mers-republic-of-korea](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/mers-republic-of-korea).

**Firework safety**

Last year in the U.S. there were more than 10,000 injuries and 11 deaths due to fireworks. Most of these occurred in the month surrounding the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The highest rate of injury was among children younger than 15. Sparklers and bottle rockets, often perceived by parents as less dangerous, accounted for over 23 percent of all fireworks injuries.

Here are a few tips on how to enjoy fireworks safely:

- never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks
- back up a safe distance immediately after lighting fireworks with fuses

- keep a bucket of water or a hose nearby in case of fire
- do not point or throw fireworks at another person

For more safety tips, visit [onsafety.cpsc.gov/blog/2015/06/26/dont-let-fun-with-fireworks-turn-tragic/](https://onsafety.cpsc.gov/blog/2015/06/26/dont-let-fun-with-fireworks-turn-tragic/).

### **EIS officer leaving IDPH, but staying close by**

Samir Koirala, CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service officer at IDPH, has finished his two-year fellowship with IDPH and will be taking a CDC position at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. He has worked on projects involving maternal and child health and infectious disease while at IDPH, including travelling to Sierra Leone in response to the ongoing Ebola outbreak.

Best of luck, Samir!

### **Epi-Update Next Week**

Due to the state holiday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, IDPH will not be publishing the weekly Epi-Update. The next Epi-Update will be issued on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July.

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

### **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

None

### **Have a healthy and happy (and hopefully drier) week!**

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